



MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND
THE LODI CITY COUNCIL

September 9, 1997

PLACE Carnegie Forum, 305 W. Pine Street, Lodi

TIME 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER The regular meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm. by Mayor Pennino. Attendance was recorded.

PRESENT Board Members: Mr. Ken Davis, President; Mr. David Worfolk, Vice President; Dr. Clifford Mettler, Clerk; Dr. Norm Mowery; Dr. Ken Mullen; Mr. Harvey Robins; Mr. Bob Weaver

Lodi Unified School District

Administrators: Dr. Del Alberti, Superintendent; Mr. Charles Matus, Associate Superintendent, K-12 Schools and Educational Services; Ms. Marilyn Domingo, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services; Ms. Mamie Starr, Assistant Superintendent, Facility Planning; Mrs. Gloria Evosevich, Administrative Assistant

City of Lodi City Council: Mayor Phillip Pennino; Mayor Pro Tem Jack Sieglock; Council Member Keith Land, Council Member David Warner; Mr. Dixon Flynn, City Manager, Ms. Janet Keeter, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Richard Prima, City Engineer, Mr. Rad Bartlam, Community Development Director; Mr. Randy Hays, City Attorney; Mrs. Alice Reimche, City Clerk; Mr. Ron Williamson, Director, Parks & Recreation; Ms. Susan Lake, Deputy City Clerk

ABSENT Lodi City Council Member Stephen Mann

Mayor Pennino welcomed the public to the meeting. He touched on the topics listed on the agenda, noting that Items 1, 2 and 3 are focused agenda topics while Item 4 is open for more general discussion of potential joint projects between the City and the District.

TOPICS 1) **Lincoln School Site**

Ms. Starr introduced the topic. She explained that the Lincoln School Site has been a topic of discussion by the City Council and Board of Education 2x2 Committee since July, 1996. She stated that from these discussions the objective to "satisfactorily clean-up the corner of Pine Street and Cherokee Lane and mitigate potential hazards" was defined. She noted that District parameters were also defined as: The Adult School would remain at the site with minimal or no cost to the Adult School for land use changes; and, the District would retain ownership of the Cherokee Lane frontage.

Ms. Starr then described the first of two proposals:

- The District sells a portion of the Oak Street frontage.
- The City buys the property with grant funds and creates 3 to 5 residential lots.

- The District uses the proceeds to move existing portables and demolishes the old building.
- The City develops a plan for a park on the demolished area.
- The City coordinates park development with the district and service clubs.
- The City finances park construction using grant funds (the district maintains ownership of the land).
- The City maintains the park area; LUSD maintains the remaining school area.

Ms. Starr stated that in January, 1997, the issues were reviewed and a tentative schedule was presented. She indicated that in April, 1997, additional research was done which revealed the following information:

- Estimated property proceeds are less than demolition and moving cost estimates.
- There is no 'good' location for three portables and the Adult School prefers to stay in their present location.
- The Adult School 'might' be able to finance the demolition of the old building.
- If lots are not sold, there is no benefit to Habitat for Humanity.
- Bare land areas are an eyesore in the neighborhood, so the question remains as to how to handle this issue.
- Park usage would need to be determined.
- Will the park be an attractive nuisance, creating new policing problems?
- Will vandalism of existing school buildings increase?
- Mr. Dick Sanborn, representing Cherokee Lane businesses, supported the clean-up, but recommended keeping the park simple due to the fact that the property's long-term use should be commercial.

The second proposal was described as:

- The Adult School would pay for the demolition of the building.
- The City creates a simple park design and plan for Cherokee frontage only.
- The City develops the park with grant funds.
- The City maintains the park as an entrance to east side and downtown areas.
- Assumption is that the long-term use of the land will be commercial.
- The City and District reach mutual agreement.
- No lots would be available for Habitat for Humanity.
- There would be no moving costs, as the Adult School would remain in its current location.
- The park would serve as an attractive entrance to the downtown area of the City until there is a permanent land use.

Referring to the proposed schedule set forth by the joint 2x2 Committee, Ms. Starr indicated that the committee would continue to review the development plan and in January, 1998, seek public input, take action, and finalize agreements, with demolition taking place in Spring, 1998.

Mr. Bartlam reported that discussion has been ongoing for some time among City staff members with regards to the Lincoln School property. He indicated that up to this point, discussion has remained conceptual in nature. Mr. Bartlam highlighted the three components included in the proposed park plan -- a picnic shelter, a playground, and a basketball court. He indicated that the plan aligns realistically with the available grant funds. He commented that the City is particularly pleased with the

concept of the improvements, as the intersection of Pine and Cherokee serves as an entryway into the downtown area. He stated that the City is hopeful that the project will get underway this year.

At the conclusion of the topic report, discussion was held with Ms. Starr and Mr. Bartlam responding to questions and comments. Ms. Starr provided clarification with regards to the Adult School. She explained that the Adult School is funded independently of K-12 education and they are, therefore, responsible for providing for their own facility and maintenance needs. She indicated that it would be more cost effective for the Adult School to fund the demolition of the old building than to relocate the current portables. She noted that the offer from the Adult School to demolish the building is a preliminary offer and will require further investigation and discussion.

Discussion centered on the practicality of the proposed park. The question of safety was discussed, as well as the fact that Habitat for Humanity already has homes lined up for the property. It was pointed out that once the land is being utilized as an active park, it will be difficult to turn it into commercial property. Mr. Bartlam stated that a park can be a plus for commercial developments as well. He stated that the improvements being made on Cherokee are on the basis that beautification of the boulevard is a catalyst to make the property a prime investment. Mr. Flynn stated that he does not see a problem with the property being developed and maintained as a park, due to the fact that alternate property will soon become available since some Cherokee Lane businesses plan to relocate to other areas.

Ms. Starr then explained various liability aspects of the park. Vandalism and injury issues were discussed with regards to the assumption of liability. Mr. Bartlam stated that these issues would be covered under a property user/owner agreement between the City and the District.

Discussion continued. Dr. Mowery suggested that the park would be an excellent choice for a memorial to the history of Lodi. Mr. Warner commented that a year ago he was not in favor of the plan, but after working through the various ideas and concepts, he supports the plan and believes it to be a good use of the property. He stated that he would still like to see some of the land allocated to Habitat for Humanity.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the consensus of the Board and the City Council was to move forward with the proposal.

2) WOODLAKE LITTLE LEAGUE PROPOSAL - GENERAL DISCUSSION ABOUT CITY IMPLICATIONS

Ms. Keeter introduced the proposal from a City perspective. Ms. Keeter commended Ms. Starr and Dr. Alberti for notifying the City of the potential project with the Woodlake Little League. Ms. Keeter stated that the Lodi Parks & Recreation Department has been in operation for over 37 years and has proved itself to be a solid sports and recreational program. She stated that this is central to the City's concerns with the proposal. She explained that the second major concern stems from the fact that the City has had facility and field use agreements with the District for many years. She pointed out that these concerns break down into two issues: the use of the facility and the fact that the program will change within the Lodi community.

Ms. Starr then presented an overview of the Woodlake Little League proposal and pertinent information surrounding the proposal:

- Woodlake Little League requested that the District consider an agreement allowing the League to improve the entire turfed area at Woodbridge School consistent with the adopted master plan. There would be two improved baseball diamonds and possibly a jogging track. Soccer and flag football would overlay the fields.
- The District anticipates a contribution of about \$90,000 over time from the Little League, with the League being responsible for all field maintenance, including mowing.
- The school will be the priority user of the field, followed by the Little League, with use restricted during the planting time this fall.

Ms. Starr stated that after the first presentation, the Board expressed concern about the impact of the agreement on the City's use of the fields. She indicated that with the approval of the agreement, the fields would not be as available for City programs as they have been in the past and may result in the following:

- Currently, the District has only one signed use agreement with the City and that is for soccer. Mr. Alexander from the Lodi Parks & Recreation Department, indicated that relocating this practice would not be a problem. The District expects the teams could use the fields right up to the time that planting occurs. As soccer is hard on a field, the League will probably request that future use agreements for soccer not be issued.
- In the spring the fields are used for City baseball. This will not be possible in the future as the fields will be used by the Little League. They may also have winter ball.
- Current open public use could possibly be restricted if there is field damage. Otherwise, the fields would continue to be open.

Ms. Starr stated that the proposal appears to provide additional after-school recreational opportunities for both children and adults as well as improved facilities for Woodbridge students. She pointed out that it also provides the District with a unique opportunity to implement a part of the Master Plan, and the arrangement will provide a higher level of maintenance at a cost savings to the district.

Referring to the Master Plan, Ms. Starr indicated that the plan was approved by the Board in October, 1994, and by the County Board of Supervisors in June, 1995. She stated that the agreement for development of the Woodbridge site as a joint District and County neighborhood park facility was delayed because of the District's bond measure; however, both staffs are refining the draft for future approval. She added that the County has some funding that they will put towards the project once the agreement is finalized. She stated that the Woodlake proposal is very consistent with this plan and there is a similar arrangement in the Morada area.

Ms. Starr stated that the District is sensitive to the City's concerns and action on the item has been continued to the September 23 Board Study Session. She noted that the District understands the matter will be presented for action at a special meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and that a recommendation will be made to the City Council. She further stated that in the absence of information on any potential adverse impacts and based on District policy and past practice as well as an opportunity to implement the master plan, there appears to be no reason for staff not to recommend the Board approve the agreement.

Mr. Williamson then presented the potential issues related to the proposal as it affects the City of Lodi. They included:

- City displacement from Woodbridge Middle School
- Woodbridge Middle School out of rotation for field resting
- Present and future impacts on other fields due to potential program expansion
- Limited use of facility by City for soccer and other sports programs
- Past and current cooperation of City and LUSD for joint use of facilities for school and recreation sports programs
- Question of whether or not there is a need for a Little League Program
- Demand for Board members and volunteers
- Diluting sponsorships
- Recruiting coaches
- Fundraising efforts
- Potential confusion regarding registration/tryouts between the two programs
- Potential problem of players "jumping" from one program to the other
- BOBS tradition for over 37 years

Discussion was held. Mr. Warner stated that he believes the issue goes beyond the improvement of fields. He shared his concern that once outside sports organizations begin moving into Lodi the main issue will be business, not what is best for kids. He commented that playing fields are already overcrowded and therefore shifting teams from one field to another is not practical. Mr. Weaver stated that it has been his experience in working with Little League organizations in Stockton to see more opportunities made available for youth to participate in sports. He indicated that he believes the proposal can benefit Lodi in the same way.

Responding to Mr. Pennino's concern that a BOBS spokesperson was not invited to attend the meeting, Mr. Flynn explained that due to the limited timeline before the Board, this issue was brought forward to ensure that both the City Council and the Board were well informed of the issues at hand. He explained that the City Council still has a process to be followed which will allow for input from BOBS as well as the Parks and Recreation Commission before making a formal decision on the matter.

Mr. Williamson stated that it is his belief that the proposal will adversely affect the Parks Department, the City, and the BOBS organization. He stressed the importance of honoring past partnerships. He explained that every year as a program concludes parents are asked to complete an evaluation of the program. He stated that at no time has anyone indicated an interest in entering into a National Little League program. Mr. Williamson explained that last year 2,200 young people played on 155 youth teams

under the City's programs. He indicated that teams normally like to practice a minimum of three times per week which would equal close to 500 practices. He stated that City parks and school playing fields are already compacted and eliminating the Woodbridge field would only add to the problem.

Mr. Williamson explained in detail how the proposal would impact the BOBS program in the areas of sponsorships, fundraisers, and fees. He stressed the importance of examining all aspects of the proposal and the overall impact it would have on the City's programs and the schools within those boundaries.

Mr. Williamson stated that he believes the City is doing a more than adequate job with the youth sports programs, and in light of the great relationship the City has had with the schools over the past years, we would not want to see that partnership diminished.

Further discussion continued. Mr. Williamson provided information on the differences between the Little League Program and the BOBS program. He explained that Little League sponsors baseball and softball and the BOBS offers baseball, softball, football, basketball, and recreational and competitive soccer. Board Members and Council Members then shared their opinions and concerns.

At the conclusion of the report topic, Mr. Bob Johnson, Parks & Recreation Commission, pointed out that the City serves the entire school district with 30 to 35% of the youth participating in the BOBS programs coming from outside of the City limit.

3) Past and Future School Bond Issues Discussion

Ms. Starr stated that the school bond topic was placed on the agenda in anticipation of presenting the results of the recent opinion poll conducted by the District with regards to the bond measure. Ms. Starr explained that as the data is not yet available, she would open the topic for discussion.

Mr. Warner shared his disappointment with the outcome of the bond. He stated that he firmly believes a low key election is not the answer. He urged the Board to return the issue to the voters again -- this time with a much stronger approach.

Mayor Pennino agreed, pointing to the need for the City and the District to work together to pass a bond. He stated that through partnership efforts, other communities have worked together to produce top-notch, state-of-the-art high school facilities. He also questioned whether the District has done a sufficient job of informing the public. Mayor Pennino then referred to the many mandates placed upon education by the State, and that the public does not understand that the District has little control over their budget.

Mrs. Reimche commented that past history within the community points to senior citizens as being the majority of the voters. She stressed the importance of gearing future initiatives towards convincing seniors of the benefits of a school bond.

Dr. Mowery stated that he found the election to be a real eye-opener in that the public did not seem to be aware of what they were voting for. He stressed that education is the key.

Mr. Worfolk stated that the District represents a wide geographical area and yet many people only emphasize the "Lodi" portion of the District's name, ignoring the "Unified." He recognized the importance of breaking down the barriers, moving beyond past history, and uniting to provide the best education for all students within the boundaries of the Lodi Unified School District.

Mr. Sieglock commented that he does not believe the benefits of passing the bond came through clearly to the public. He shared his opinion that splitting the school district would be a 'hook' to passing a bond. He stated that the bond proceeds could be used to set-up the new district as well as bring about changes within the two school districts. He stated that Stockton is growing at a faster rate than Lodi, and the Stockton student population will soon become the majority. Mr. Sieglock stated his belief that there is an equal desire among both the Lodi and Stockton constituency's to see the District split in order to allow more control among local jurisdictions for school improvements.

Ms. Domingo explained the extensive process of splitting a district. She indicated that it is a very expensive process and requires approval by the state. She stated that it also requires proof that both districts can survive financially and that the split will not cost the state additional money. Ms. Domingo stated that she would not be financially in favor of splitting the District, referencing several factors including the necessity to create double administrations, the splitting of assets, and the division of staffing. In addition, she explained that it takes two to three years to get the process moving at the state level.

Mr. Sieglock stated that he understands the complexity of the process. He indicated, however, that if you never begin the process it will never come to fruition. He commented that he does not believe the District has ever explained these facts to the voting public. Putting aside the financial implications of a split, Ms. Domingo questioned what the educational benefits would be of splitting the District. Mr. Sieglock stated that he does not feel the two issues can be separated and he does not believe the voters in Lodi are going to support a bond.

Discussion continued. Mayor Pennino recommended to the Board that they invest the necessary dollars to hire a public relations firm to promote a bond. Mr. Davis stated that the Board is in a delicate position with regards to this matter, as the public carefully scrutinizes how funds are spent. He stated clearly that he believes the problem is that without the bond, programs are going to be cut. He commented that the issues that prevent the voting public from approving a bond has direct consequences on students. He pointed out that even if a bond were to pass next year, it would not be in time to build the necessary facilities to adequately house the District's student population.

Mr. Robins stated his belief that the bond failed because of a lack of communication and an insufficient number of volunteers. He noted that the last successful bond initiative in Lodi Unified involved over 700

volunteers. He commented that the District's population has doubled since that time, and therefore, a large volunteer effort is necessary to get the message across. Mr. Robins supported the notion of hiring a public relations consultant as opposed to a political consultant.

Mr. Flynn stated that he feels it is important for the District to understand that the City is committed to providing quality education for its residents. He commented on the importance of maintaining good schools within the community in order to advance economic development. Mr. Flynn stated that it is not easy to discuss sensitive issues, but necessary in light of the fact that there are community members who feel a sense of being overwhelmed by Stockton.

Discussion continued with the conversation centering on the community's perception of the District. Dr. Mowery commented that he feels Lodi can benefit from the diversity that Stockton provides. He added that he also feels it is important to keep the dialog going between the City and the District. Dr. Mettler stated that it seems that what the City Council has been saying to the Board is the same as what the Lodi community has been saying in the ballot box for years. Referring to Mrs. Reimche's comments about the majority vote of seniors in the community, Dr. Mettler commented that cutting programs will not have an effect on those voters.

Growth factors of the Stockton and Lodi communities were then discussed. Ms. Starr explained that the District's biggest concern with overcrowding is in the City of Lodi. She stated that overcrowding at the high school level is districtwide, but in Lodi a change in demographics has caused overcrowding at the elementary level.

As the discussion concluded, Mr. Davis stated that it is important to realize there are many reasons that voters do not support bond measures. He stated that basing a vote on personal issues is not voting for what is best for kids. He stated that the job ahead of the Board is how to convince the public to put aside their personal issues and vote to support schools.

4) Items of Mutual Concern

Dr. Mowery stated that he would like to see the City and District continue working together with the watering systems and checking the humidity. He then commented on the value he sees in the after school programs and his hope that they can be continued. Mayor Pennino stated that some churches are considering opening their facilities to area schools for after school programs.

Mayor Pennino commented on computer training needs and the possibility of joining together in training ventures. He shared his concern with regards to partying by area youth and recommended a more concentrated crackdown effort to remedy these situations.

Dr. Alberti stated the District is expanding its offerings of Distance Learning opportunities. Mrs. Evosevich explained that through the generous donation of California State University, Sacramento, a \$250,000 satellite was installed on the roof of Lodi High School which allows teachers to take courses towards their Master's Degree in Education. She stated that a proposal is now being worked out which will allow teachers to study from the ESC for a Master's Degree in Education with an emphasis on Technology.

Mr. Warner commented on the positive opportunities the 2x2 meetings have presented for the City and the District to work together. Dr. Alberti stated that the District has also engaged in 2x2 meetings with the City of Stockton.

Mr. Davis thanked the Council for the opportunity to meet together and to work in partnership with the City.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk

President